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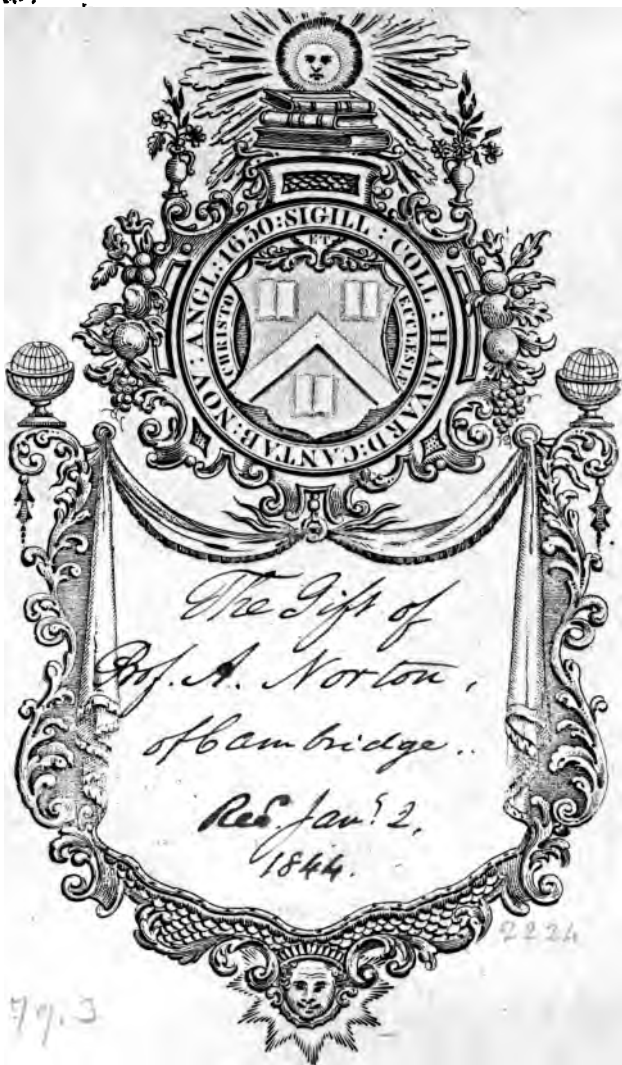
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B^d Oct. 6. 1845.



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B^d Oct. 6. 184











There is a different edition of
this play, with the title "Wreckers Daughter"
— it is the same work.

THE
D A U G H T E R .

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS.

BY
JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES,
AUTHOR OF "VIRGINIUS," "THE HUNCHBACK," &c.

NEW-YORK:
GEORGE DEARBORN & CO. GOLD STREET.
1837.

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HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

*The Gift of Mr. [illegible]
Rec Jan 2. 1869.*

NEW-YORK:
Printed by SCATCHERD & ADAMS,
No. 28 Gold-street.

TO
JOHN GARDNER, ESQ.

(LATE OF GLASGOW.)

MY DEAR JOHN,

ACCEPT the Dedication of this Play, as a
small acknowledgment of a large debt of Friendship.

Yours gratefully,
and affectionately,
JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

London,
29th November, 1836.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE subject of this play was suggested to me by my son, Richard Brinsley. My friend, Mr. Stephen Price, to stimulate me, defied me to produce it by a certain time. When I had finished the second scene, I lost confidence in my subject ; and had determined to select a new one—but finding that some of the passages had made a powerful impression upon a friend, on whose taste I had great reliance, I resumed my work ; and here it is, to the discomforture, yet gratification of my generous challenger.



CHARACTERS.

ROBERT, Father to Marian.

NORRIS.

WOLF, Friend to Norris.

EDWARD, In love with Marian.

CLERGYMAN.

PHILIP,

AMBROSE,

STEPHEN,

} Wreckers.

JAILOR.

2 CONSTABLES.

BAILIFF.

MARIAN, In love with Edward.

SCENE—The Coast of Cornwall.

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B^d Oct. 6. 1845.



THE
D A U G H T E R .

A C T I.

SCENE I.

The shore, on the coast of Cornwall.

Enter PHILIP, AMBROSE, and others.

PHILIP.

Our craft is scandaliz'd ! We strip the dead !
But what of that ? The dead but want a grave !
We give it them ; we take what they can spare.

AMBROSE.

You're right ; we do no more !

PHILIP.

As to the rights
Of the living, whom they leave behind, let men
Look to their own ! If not, why let it go !
Is it for us to stand the drenching rain !
Wade to our necks into the sea ! perhaps
Take boat and pull among the breakers, at
The peril, every moment, of our lives,
For their behoof, while they lie snug in bed ;
Loll o'er their fires, or sit around their feasts ?
Methinks there's reason in the wrecker's trade !

AMBROSE.

There is. He risks, and toils for what he gets.





MARIAN.

Say two !
I'll make my mind up to two months—and then,
If thou return'st before the time, thou know'st
It will be usury of happiness !
Thou'lt stay two months !—Two months is a long time !

EDWARD.

I tell thee but a month !

MARIAN.

I'll not believe it ;
For, if I should, and thou beyond should'st stay,
Each hour beyond will be another month ;
So, for my two months, may I pine two score !
Nay, for two months I will not look for thee !

EDWARD.

And then we marry.

MARIAN.

So my father says.

EDWARD.

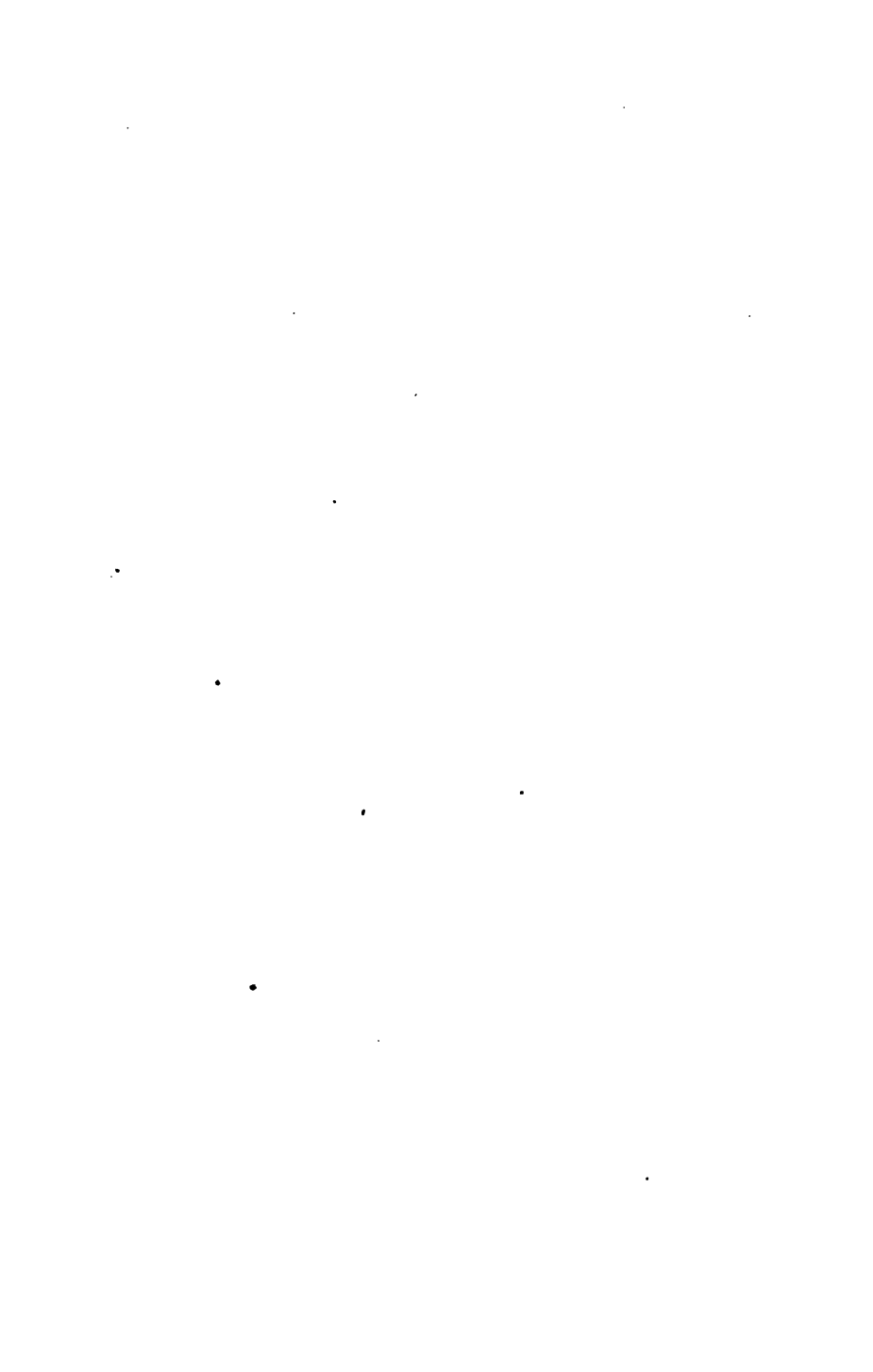
O Marian, when thou'rt mine !

MARIAN.

Thou wilt not go
Again to sea.

EDWARD.

No, girl !—Another trip.
We are rich enough ! How love hath made us wise !
When boy and girl, we talk'd as man and wife ;
And 'gan to hoard 'gainst days of housekeeping
Our first small venture—what a heap it brought !
Its value more than ten times doubled ! 'Twas
That Heaven did bless it !—Marian, that's the luck !
And since that lucky day, whate'er we've tried
Has thriven with us still.





MARIAN.

That's the tale.

The wrecker heard him groan—so, conscience-wrung,
He did confess—and, to secure his prey,
Destroy'd what Heav'n had bade the tempest spare :
Stopp'd with his hands the holy breath of life,
And watching, for assurance that the work
Of foulest sin was done, by the wild glare
Of the lightning, which just then did rend the clouds,
And light the murderous tempest ghastly up,
Beheld the feature of his banish'd boy,
By his own hands compress'd ; and stiff in death !

EDWARD.

But what hath this to do with him, the sight
Of whom recall'd the tale ?

MARIAN.

His father is
A convict, serving in a distant land.
His term of shame, almost expir'd ; for crime
Done on the storm-strewn shore.

EDWARD.

I know he is.

MARIAN.

I mus'd on them, as by thy mother's hearth
I sat ; which soon, methought, began to spread
Into the bay—a furious tempest on,—
Men, women, children watching here and there,
On the look-out for some unlucky barque
Its wrath might catch, and strand upon the shore !
There was the lightning, and the thunder, and
The rain and wind, and rattling shingles, as
The billows, mountain high, came tumbling in,
And there stood Norris, on that reef of his.

EDWARD.

Go on, as 'twere a real tale thou told'st,
Thou fixest me, with eagerness to hear.

MARIAN.

Then came a vessel—a huge hulk!—without
A single mast left standing;—such a one
Was wreck'd upon the coast three winters gone,
When thou wast far at sea—I witness'd it.

EDWARD.

That ship did come to mind.

MARIAN.

O how she heav'd
And sank, and reel'd, until at last she struck
Right on the Wrecker's reef! when soon she went
To pieces.—Then the body of a man
Was wash'd on shore, and Norris sprang upon it;
But life, as in the story I had heard,
Was in it still; and Norris took that life!
He stabb'd the shipwreck'd man—and lo! it was
His father!—I did dream the very same
That very night. And often since, in sleep,
Ay, and in waking too, have seen't again—
Have seen the bay, the tempest, and the ship;
The body floating in, and Norris there,
Rifling it of its life—the body of
His father! Strange things have been thought of him;
And never look I on that scowling man,
But I do think I see a murderer!
But thou art going and I talk of him!
I know not wherefore, but I never felt
So sad before at parting!

EDWARD.

Fear'st for me?

MARIAN.

No ! Thou art good !—Hast trust in Heaven—implor'st
Its mercy night and morn ! 'Twill show it thee !
Thou'lt find it 'mid the tempest—near the shoal
Off the lee-shore !—or, if thy vessel strike,
Or founder, surer than the sea-bird's wing
The sea-bird, it will float thee 'bove the wave,
And bear thee to thy native cliff again !
I have no fears for thee !—I think—I know
Thou wilt come back to me ! Thou hast no fears ?

EDWARD.

None, Marian !

MARIAN.

But thou hast !—I'm sure thou hast !
I see a trouble in thy face !—I do !
Thou fear'st for something !—What is it ?

EDWARD.

I would
Thou hadst not told me of Black Norris.

MARIAN.

Why ?
See'st aught in what I told thee ?—Dost thou think
My dream bodes ill ?—that something's sure to come ?
Think'st thou there's aught in dreams ? Don't answer me !
I don't believe there is !

EDWARD.

There is not, girl !

MARIAN.

Why wish then what thou didst ?

EDWARD.

He gives thee pain.

MARIAN.

I will not see him again ! I nothing see
When thou'rt away. The sun, the earth, the sea,—
All things without are gone—I have no eye,
No ear—except within—within, where only
Then can I see and hear there !—Where I'm with thee
At sea—on shore—and oft in hardest strait
Of peril—where I'm always nearest to thee
With superhuman power to bear thee through
In spite of sternest danger ! There's the gun !

EDWARD.

Farewell !—

MARIAN.

I'll see thee to the beach !—I will—
Ay to the water's edge ! That I could go
Along with thee !—The waves might rise and roar,
I would not hear or see them !—Come.

EDWARD.

Nay, here
We'll part—my messmates, girl, will laugh at thee.

MARIAN.

Let them ! What ! lose a minute—with an age
To come of absence ! I, that would brave the sea
To go with thee, heed those the sea doth toss !
I'll go with thee e'en to the water's edge !
And then mine eyes shall go along with thee !
And when thou leavest them, and they must stop
My thoughts—my heart—my soul—which water, land,
Air, nothing 'neath the sun can tear thee from ! [*Exeunt*

SCENE III.

The inside of Robert's Cottage. Robert seated in the centre, occupied in splicing an oar.

Enter STEPHEN—a lad.

ROBERT.

Well, Stephen! what of a ship?

STEPHEN.

She's under way
With every yard of canvass spread.

ROBERT.

The wind
Is fair.

STEPHEN.

A point, or more, abaft the beam.
A ten-knot breeze, and steady.

ROBERT.

So it seems.
'Twill change ere night.

STEPHEN.

I see no signs of it.

ROBERT.

You know them not when do you see them, Stephen;
Though a good sailor, you're a young one yet;
But I am old acquaintance of the weather.
"A point," you say, "or more abaft the beam?"
Then is the vane north-west. Ne'er heed the vane,
Look ever to the cloud, the weather-cock
Behoves the shipman heed, which tells what wind
Will come. How steers the cloud?

STEPHEN.

North-west.

ROBERT.

That's right
Against the ship which now sails with the wind !
Now mark my words ! Ere night the wind will take
Her merry sails aback, and talk to her !
And bid her clew her topgallants up !
There will be call for reefs, and work for sheets
And halyards ! " Fore sheet, fore top bowling !"
Throughout the night will keep a busy watch !
But she'll have sea-room, and no gull more light !
Doth sit the wave than she. Here ! Lend a hand !
[*Stephen goes to Robert, and assists him.*
Where's Marian ?

STEPHEN.

I left her on the beach
Following the 'parting ship with all her eyes !
I call'd to her—the sands on which she stood
Had ears as much as she ! She heard me not.
I turn'd to mark if she did follow me—
As well expect the sea. It mov'd, but she
Stood still—in plight as sad as barque that's driven
Upon a quick-sand, settling fast, and sure
Never to come away !

ROBERT.

Her mother's vein
Is in the girl !—So fond a wife was she,
That marriage, which with most is end of love,
With me was only the beginning on't !—
She had been early sent to school—remain'd there
'Till she could teach where first she had been taught.
You see the girl she made my Marian !
She made me good, for she was goodness 'self,
Reclaim'd me from a wrecker, for a time.

But evil habits, Stephen, like old sores,
Are seldom safe from breaking out again !
One night arose the cry " A ship on shore !"
I had been out carousing at a wedding—
The love of my old trade came strong upon me—
Down to the beach I flew and fell to work.
Unheeding she did follow. Three whole hours
Remained she standing in the pelting storm !
I found her with the blood wash'd out of her
White as our cliff—cold, stiff, and motionless.
My ill-got spoil I soon exchang'd for her,
Nor set her down 'till in our bed I laid her—
But heaven did know she was too good for me ;
For from that bed she never rose again !

[turns from Stephen.]

What of the ship ? Go to the door and see !

STEPHEN.

She's hull down.

ROBERT.

Any other sail in sight ?

STEPHEN.

Three to Westward.

ROBERT.

Up or down channel ?—which ?

STEPHEN.

Up channel do they bear.

ROBERT.

One of the three
May come ashore to-night.

STEPHEN.

The ship has chang'd
Her course !

ROBERT.

The wind has chang'd!—'Tis right ahead!
She's on the larboard tack—Is it not so?

STEPHEN.

It is.

ROBERT.

It looks thick weather round the ship,
Does not it?

STEPHEN.

Yes.

ROBERT.

And 'twill grow thicker! Storm
Is in the air, though here 'tis sunshine still.
I feel it! It will blow great guns to-night;
The scud will gallop and the waves will leap!
A cloud has just come o'er the sun! What kind
Of cloud?

STEPHEN.

A streaky, one, and black and low,
Stretching from East to West, and in its wake
A fleet of others.

ROBERT.

To be sure! I know it
As well as you that see it. Get my axe,
Boat-hook, and grapple—Lay them here beside me.

[Stephen goes out and returns with the things.]

A storm is coming on from the South-East,
Right from the sea—full on the shore! The ship
Is lost that keeps not a good offing, for
The sea, in such a wind as cometh on,
Rolls in like a spring-tide, and surely sweeps
Into our bay the unwary barque, that hugs
This iron-bound inhospitable shore!
What offing keep the ships?

STEPHEN.

Two miles, the first,
And more.

ROBERT.

She's safe. The second?

STEPHEN.

Scarce a mile.

ROBERT.

She'll have her work to do to clear the bay!
Behoves her to sail well upon a wind!
Lie high! Be lively in her stays! The third?

STEPHEN.

Not half a mile. The first ship is about!

ROBERT.

The wind has come to her! That's the new wind
I told you of!—the wind that brings the storm!
Will make the tackle sing! the bulk-heads creak!
Try braces, shrouds and all! The very wind
For the wrecker! I did see it at one o'clock!

STEPHEN.

The second ship is now about.

ROBERT.

She is?

STEPHEN.

And bearing from the land. The third ship—

ROBERT.

Ay?

Well, what of her?—Is she about too?

STEPHEN.

No,

She misses stays! They ware her!

ROBERT.

Is she deep ?

STEPHEN.

She is.

ROBERT.

Within the head ?

STEPHEN.

Within the head.

ROBERT.

How far ?

STEPHEN.

A quarter of a mile.

ROBERT.

A wreck !
Sure as she's now afloat !

STEPHEN.

Here's Marian.

Enter MARIAN, abstracted.

ROBERT.

My Marian ! My child ! Her thoughts are still
Upon the parting ship. How does my girl ?

MARIAN. [*coming to herself, and running to Robert.*]
Well, father, well ! What have you there ? Your axe,
Boat-hook, and grapple ! Ah !—a storm is coming !
You're for the shore again !—the heartless shore,
That spares nor ship nor shipman !

ROBERT.

Did it lighten ?

STEPHEN.

It did.

[*Robert rises, and takes up his wrecker's instruments.*]

MARIAN.

Stay, father, stay ! Sit down again,
And listen to me.

ROBERT. [*resuming his seat.*]

Well ?

MARIAN.

How canst thou bear
To strip the seaman, whom the winds do strip—
The waves—the rocks—which know not what they do ;
But thou dost know, and ought'st to feel ! To live
Upon the plunder of the elements !
The havock of whose fury it should be,
Thy labour to repair ! The drowning man
Forgot, to get possession of the mite
For which he bids the perils of the sea !
And, if he sinks, is not his bubbling breath—
That calls upon the friends he leaves behind—
A testament, more strong than pen can write,
To make assurance unto those he loves
Of aught the billows spare ! Thy boat-hook drops—
Give me thy axe.

STEPHEN.

The storm is on ! It thunders !

MARIAN.

It is the voice of Heaven in anger !—calls
On men for pity to each other—each
Alike in peril plac'd !—Let go thy axe !
Think of the axe that's lifted now above
And falling fast !—might it not light on thee ?

Let go thy axe !—O the poor ship—poor crew !
That hear the thunder which the ship hears not !
O their poor wives ! poor children ! and poor friends !
That pray this hour some help may be at hand !
Hear me, my father ! Have not you a child ?
Were you at sea !—were you within that ship !
Give me your axe—and now that coil of rope—
Your grapple—give it me !

STEPHEN.

A gun !

ROBERT.

It is
The signal of distress.

MARIAN.

Thy grapple, father !

ROBERT.

I tell thee, Marian, not a soul can live
In such a sea as boils within our bay.

MARIAN.

And shouldst thou therefore strip the drowned man ?
O ! at his death-bed, by the side of which
No friend doth stand, there is a solitude
Which makes the grave itself society !—
Helplessness, in comparison with which
An ordinary death is kin to life !—
And silence, which the bosom could fill up
With thoughts more aching, sad, and desolate
Than ever uttered wailing tongues of friends
Collected round the bier of one lov'd !—
To rifle him !—purloin his little stock
Of gold, or jewels, or apparel !—take
And use it as thine own !—thou !—thou ! whom Heaven
Permits to see the sun that's set to him ;
And treasures ten times dearer than the sun

Which he shall never see!—O touch it not!
Or if thou touch it—drop it, and fall down
Upon thy knees, at thought of what he was,
And thou, through grace, art still!

ROBERT.

Her mother's voice!
Her mother's words!—Here take the coil!—Put by
My boat-hook and my axe!—My Marian,
I'll not go to the beach!

MARIAN. [*having laid the things by.*]

Heaven guard his ship!

ROBERT.

Thy lover's?—Fear not! she has sea room! She's
A bird upon the sea!

MARIAN.

I am weary, father!

ROBERT.

Go to thy bed! Thou art mind and body worn!

MARIAN.

I will! You'll mind?

ROBERT.

I will, my Marian,

[*Exit Marian.*]

STEPHEN.

Another gun!

ROBERT.

And nearer than the first!
She's driving in apace! Who pass'd the door?

STEPHEN.

Black Norris,

ROBERT.

He will make a mint to-night !

STEPHEN.

She takes the ground !—Her masts are overboard !

ROBERT.

Black Norris will not spare, and why should I ?
The waves won't spare, and why should he or I ?
Chests, bales will come ashore !—cordage and spars,
Hatchets will go to work !—No one will spare,
And why should I ?—Not I !—I'll have my share !
[Takes up the boat-hook, &c.

MARIAN. [*rushing in.*]

Father !

ROBERT.

My child, go in !

MARIAN.

Thou go'st not forth !

ROBERT.

I must !

MARIAN.

O father ! 'tis unhallowed work !

ROBERT.

Go thou to rest.

MARIAN.

And thou at work like that ?
How would'st thou sleep if I were doing wrong ?
I will not let thee forth !

ROBERT.

Come from the door !

MARIAN.

Father !—when Heaven doth bid me shut the door !

ROBERT.

Bid thee who may, I'll open it!—Give way!

[*Forces her from it—she falls—Exit
Robert and Stephen.*]

MARIAN.

Father—I'm stunn'd! He's gone—How could he go!

Oh vice that's early planted! Hard to weed it!

Plant virtue early—Give the flower the chance

You suffer to the weed!—To hope success

Where my poor mother fail'd—Heaven pity him!

Heaven pity him—and I, his child, on earth

And not attempt to save him!—Father—Father!—

[*Rushes out.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Vicinity of the Shore.

Enter WOLF and NORRIS, meeting.

NORRIS.

Wolf!

WOLF.

Norris!

NORRIS.

For the shore?

WOLF.

Yes.

NORRIS.

Whence I come.

In my o'er haste, what think you I forgot?

My wrecker's gear. I left them all behind!

My hatchet, boat-hook, grapple, e'en my knife! [*Going.*]

WOLF. [*stopping him.*]

Tarry awhile! Take breath! Your knife and axe,
Boat-hook and grapple, are not needed yet.

'Tis but the first of flood. Until the tide
Shall lift her o'er the outer bank, she'll hold

Together. Tarry here, and look at her!

I have heard of fine sights; ay, and seen them too!

Now what's the finest sight a man can see?

NORRIS.

The finest sight ?—a ship ashore, in a bay
Like ours, ten miles and more from any town ;
A black sky, a white water, and a shore
All iron-bound, and boiling round with breakers.
No sight like that for me ! What tonnage is she ?

WOLF.

Four hundred and above. I know a ship,
And not so large a one, you had rather were
Aground than she.

NORRIS.

I know the ship you mean ;
She left the bay at noon. You're right ! I hate
That ship ! I hate her for the sake of one
She carries. Were my father in that ship
I'd laugh to see her drown ! One whom they call
A good young man—only another name
For a limb of the devil ! No young man can be good !
We are young, and know we not what we are ?—Good !
What should make others better ?—Better natures ?
There's no such thing—all mankind are the same ;
Circumstance makes a difference. Circumstance
Is not the man. Had I that fair-skinn'd girl.
Old Robert's daughter—her of the dainty limb,
Round swelling form, and dimpled lady cheek—
Had I that girl for messmate, or could have,
You'd see how soon I'd be a good young man—
Though devil at the bottom still—as he !

WOLF.

You fancy her. Why not make up to her ?

NORRIS.

I told you, now, the sight which I most love.
Wouldst learn the sight which most I hate ? Thou shalt.
The show of good, in man or woman,—but,
In woman most. That's strange ! I hate the sight

Of a modest woman ! 'Tis an eye-sore to me !
I never look on one, but straight I fall
To gazing on myself ; and then I writhe,
At thought of what I am, and what she seems ;
Until I show, unto myself, a beast !—
Yea, a brute beast !—and stand like one before her,
Gazing, and stupid,—dumb !

WOLF.

'Tis strange !

NORRIS.

It is.
I have tried to court her—have accosted her,
But ever, as that lady-cheek of hers
She has turned to me, my speech has failed me, and
I have stood stock-still, confounded at myself ;
And like a chid cur, slunk at last away !
Strange ! that the only show of goodness should
So daunt a bold man, that he dares not do
The thing he dares to wish.

WOLF.

You mean her fair ?

NORRIS.

I do ; but e'en for fair ends cannot take
Fair means ; as smiling, speaking pretty things.
Pretty behaviour, creeping inch by inch !
I'd have her at a bound !—That's not the way
She should be won. With opportunity
I'd woo her though.

WOLF.

What do you mean ?

NORRIS.

No matter.

'Tis said they'll marry when this trip is done.

Now would old Robert take a sail, and leave
The girl alone, I'd promise him that's gone
A merry wedding when his ship comes back.
How goes it on in the bay? She has moved, methinks,
Since last we looked.

WOLF.

She will not clear the bank
Before high water, or about it.

NORRIS.

And
The storm you see holds on! A lovelier
Did never break a stranded vessel up!
And plenty on't! 'Twill last till midnight. Black
As it can look, and right in the wind's eye!
Ay, steady that! How slow the tide comes in,
And yet the wind to help it. O'er the bank
And on the rough ground, she'll not hold together
The quarter of an hour. I'll be prepared.
Tell them I'm coming! They'll be sure to give
A good berth to the reef!

WOLF.

I will.

NORRIS.

Make haste.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

The sea-shore, thunder, lightning, and wind.

Enter MARIAN.

MARIAN.

I cannot light on him, and not a soul
I pass'd but I did question—Where is he?

My brain will burst !—a horrible oppression
Hangs on me ; and my senses do discharge
More than their proper parts !—I see—I hear—
Things that I should not—Forms are flitting by me !
Voices are in mine ears, as if of things
That are—and yet I know are not ! Each step
I fear to stumble o'er the body of
Some drowned man !—There's one—A heap of weeds !
O what wild work do fear and fancy make !
Did some one cry ? Well ? What ? Where are you ? No !
'Tis nobody ! What is't that still keeps up
This moaning in my ears, as if of words
Uttered in agony ? 'Tis not the sea !
'Tis not the wind !—I hear them both. 'Tis not
The wreckers on the shore !—they utter nought
But sounds of gladness. 'Tis not the ship !—she's out
Of hearing. Am I growing mad ? What spot
Is this I stand upon ? What brought me here ?
'Tis here they say a girl one time went mad,
Seeing a murder done ! She was in quest
Of her brother ; and she saw a scuffle, and
Approached the struggling men, just as the one
Did cast the other down. Although 'twas night,
She saw a knife gleam in the lifted hand
Of the uppermost ! She tried to call—so she said,
When reason did at last return—but power
Of utterance was gone. Thrice it descended,
With a dull, grinding sound ; and then, a voice,
Which stabb'd her heart and brain, exclaimed—“ He's
dead !”

It was her brother's voice. 'Tis strange that fear
Should be a thing almost as strong as death !
Should shut the lips up—and deprive the limbs
Of motion ! Yet have I a feeling how
The thing may come to pass. The girl alone—
The men upon the ground—one 'bove the other—
The knife in his uplifted hand—it falls !
I feel myself a sense of choking ; and
My feet do seem to cleave unto the ground.

My tongue doth stiffen! Ha! (*shrieks*) I have broke the spell!

I'm by myself! Another minute,—not
The girl more mad than I! They are gone! All gone!
The earth, and air, so thick awhile ago
With things that neither earth nor air do own,
Are empty now! Mine ears, and eyes, take note
Of nothing but what is—the booming sea—
The yelling wind—the ratling shingles, as
The waves do roll them up and down again;
And back my wand'ring thoughts return, to that
Which brought me 'midst their uproar—to persuade
My poor, misguided father to return,
And from his lawless work restrain his hands,
I have travers'd all the Westward shore in vain.
I'll search the Eastward now.

[*Starts again at the same heap of weeds.*]

Not yet myself—

'Tis the same heap of weeds I saw before!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Another part of the shore.

Enter ROBERT, followed by NORRIS.

NORRIS.

Old Robert! Hoa! Stop—Art afraid of me?

ROBERT.

I never fear'd a man.

NORRIS.

Why shun me then?

ROBERT.

I like thee not.

NORRIS.

"Two of a trade!" Is 't so?
Well, I'm the luckiest wrecker of you all.
I cannot help it. Fortune bear the blame!
That has her favourites, as all men know.
She has long made one of me! Is it right to hate
A man for his good luck?

ROBERT.

It is n't that.

NORRIS.

It is n't that!—What else? What can you say
Against me else? A splitter'd spar the waves
Do throw to you—a lock-fast chest to me!
To me the breakers slue the captain in;
Mate—passenger from the Indies, West or East.
A foremast man to you—you know 'tis so,
And like the rest do bear me envy; most
Unlike a man! But fortune ever turns
The evil you do wish me, into good.
I have no partner in my gains—what comes
To hand is all my own. "Afraid of me!"
I said it but in sport. I know you're not
Afraid of me, or any other man,
Or any thing! Have I not seen you leap
Into a boiling sea, to save a wretch
When his boat founder'd! 'Twas a feat I doubt
If any other of the craft would do!
Wilt go, or tarry? Nay, there's time enough;
She holds together yet. There's lots of time.
What speed didst come when drove the last on shore?

ROBERT.

Some coils of cordage, and a spar or two.

NORRIS.

What then did fortune, think you, throw to me?

ROBERT.

I cannot tell.

NORRIS.

One hundred guineas, all
But one, lapp'd here and there, in various coin,
In the heavy vest and trowsers of a man —
I mean, a body—that was wash'd ashore.
Here's one of them.

ROBERT.

A broad Doubloon.

NORRIS.

How much
Brought you your spars and cordage ? How I laughed
To see you, heavy laden, toiling home
With a few crowns' worth, and I going light
With a good hundred guineas, all but one !
And you don't like me !—Why ?—I'm a rough man ;
And low'ring as they say !—but has all fruit
A fair outside ? How ill-favoured a one
A walnut has—a chesnut—cocoa-nut !
And yet how sweet within ! Yea, there is milk
Within the cocoa-nut. You never know
Some men by their outsides ! Prove them, and then
You'll know them. Here's another piece more broad,
And heavy than the first. Know you the coin ?

ROBERT.

No !—it is strange to me.

NORRIS.

Examine it.

There's something now that I would be about ;
Yet know not what it is !—Ne'er heed ! The Devil
Will prompt me when 'tis time. [Aside.]

ROBERT.

I cannot tell
The coin.

NORRIS.

Here take a look at this.

ROBERT.

Another !

NORRIS.

Ay !—Will you believe me now ?

ROBERT.

Black Norris, you're
A lucky man !

NORRIS.

“ Black Norris ! ” Well !—it is
My nick-name. You may give it me—more black
May go by fairer name !

ROBERT.

I meant no harm.

NORRIS.

I know you did n't !—There's none ! I tell you what—
There's not a man of all the crew, but one,
I do not hate. The best were first to 'peach,
When my old father, seven long years ago,
Did something which he could not do by law :
And was transported, for the lack of learning.
He did n't know 'twas wrong ! Well, as I said,
I hate them all, but one ; and which is he ?—
Yourself—I say no more ! Believe it, or
Believe it not !

ROBERT.

Nay, rather I'd believe it.
I never thought before you were so frank.

NORRIS.

How could you think ?—Grew samphire on yon cliff,
Who'd know't, if no one went to seek it there ?
You keep aloof, and—strange !—you know me not !
You, none of you, consort with me, except
Young Wolf, another hang-dog, as they say.
He's a wrong'd man, and so am I—we are friends ;
For common wrongs make friends of those that share
them.

ROBERT.

'Tis natural.

NORRIS.

'Tis right !—as common fortunes,
So likewise doth a common vein, make friends.
My greatest enemy allows me brave !
I car'd for thee no more than I did care
For any other of the churlish set ;
But when I saw thee venture thy own life,
With ten to one against thee, for that man,
I took a liking to thee ! That, you may
Believe, or not, as well as the other.

ROBERT.

Nay,
But I believe it.

NORRIS.

You can do no good
To me !—I have nothing to get by you !

ROBERT.

Nothing !

NORRIS.

Have I not ?—What a silly adage that
About old birds and chaff !

[Aside.]

ROBERT.

Here—here's thy gold.

NORRIS.

Nay, keep it, an thou wilt.

ROBERT.

Not so, good Norris.

NORRIS. [*aside.*]

A rare bird I, to turn from black to white !—
Why, I believe you're right ! 'Tis doubtful gain,
To keep a thing that's not one's own ! The ship
Is now on the rough ground—How fair she lies !—
Her broadside to the sea, that not a wave
But tells upon her !—What a cloud of surf
Keeps flying over her !—Look !—There's a sea !
'Twill take her right a midships—Hurra !—Hurra—
She has parted in the waist !—Old Robert, where
The use of words, when men can talk by deeds !
Yon reef you know is mine—they call it mine
Because I make it mine—So far it runs
Into the bay, it makes a kind of eddy,
Whose swirl doth sweep all kinds of lumber in
'That come within its reach—as prove my gains ;
'Tis thine to-day ! Go try thy luck upon it.
I'll help thee, if thou need'st—but not to touch
A stiver, though ten bodies should float in,
With pockets cramm'd with gold. There's something !
haste !
The waves do snatch as readily as give.
The tide is on the turn—the shore doth shelve
A foot in every nine !

ROBERT.

I thank thee, Norris.

NORRIS.

Off to the reef—Have cause, and thank me then?

[*Exit Robert, hastily.*]

It is a body that is wash'd ashore,
I'd know it at twice the distance. A fine torch
The lightning! Rain will never put it out!
A body!—I begin to see it now.
Yes, it is done!

WOLF. [*entering.*]

Well, Norris!

NORRIS.

All is well.

Run to the nearest group of wreckers; say
You saw old Robert stooping o'er a body—
That you suspect foul play—and bring them to
The reef. He's there—but hold—not quite so fast;
Let me have time to join him.—Go!—don't say

[*Exit Wolf.*]

That I am there. Now, pretty Marian,
Sure as thy lover is this hour at sea,
Thy father takes a trip, and follows him.
Bide there my tackle!—I had best go bare!

[*Puts his Boat-hook, &c. behind a rock, and exit.*]

SCENE IV.

The Shore close to the sea.

Enter ROBERT, dragging in a body.—MARIAN in the distance, slowly coming down a path cut out of the cliff.

ROBERT.

The surge won't reach thee there!—I warrant me
No fear thou'lt go to it. Thy last—last draught,
In this world, hath it given thee—a cold,
Unwelcome one! Safe bide thou here! The waves
Are in a giving mood! I'd be at hand

To profit by their bounty. I did think
Some one was near me! Fancy!—How it lightens!
[*Exit.*]

Enter MARIAN.

MARIAN.

The storm distracts me with its din! This roar,
This never ending roar, which, round and round,
The Heavens keep up!—in which the sea doth join
As though the thunder were not noise enough,
With cries of men and women! I am blind
With the lightning! flash and flash and flash, as quick
As they can follow—mingling light and darkness so,
That scarce you know one moment which is which!
I'm quite bewilder'd!—I will look above,
Beyond the clouds—beyond the stars! No storm
Is there! no wreck!—no raging sea!—no thunder!
But calm, and warmth, and brightness, as befits
The dwellings of the blest.—My mother's there!
O, my poor father! Here's the storm again!
Sea, thunder, lightning—all come back again!

Re-enter ROBERT.

ROBERT. [*starts at seeing Marian.*]

I have dropp'd my knife, methinks it's somewhere here!
What's that?—Is it a mortal thing? It makes
My spirit faint within me!—'Tis the form
Of my lost Marian!—Even so she stood
In the storm wherein her life was cast away!
Can she not lie in her grave for me?—Do my sins
Break on her last rest there, and call her thence?
I sent her thither—on such nights as this
I have often look'd about me with the thought
That she was near me. There at last she is!
It is my Marian risen from her grave!
She comes to me!—O powers of grace, preserve me!
[*Kneels.*]

MARIAN.

The strength of Heaven !—To see it, yet not feel it !
Before its face do what it forbids !
And it in anger !—see the weapons of
Its wrath in motion—feel the huge earth shake at them !
And never pay it awe !—stand up to it !
Defy it !—'stead of falling on thy knees,
And asking it for mercy !

ROBERT.

Mercy !

MARIAN.

Ha !
My father !

ROBERT.

Marian !

MARIAN.

On thy knees !—That's right—
Fear not ! That dost Heaven's bidding ?—Do not rise
Until thou risest with its blessing on thee !

ROBERT. [*rising.*]

What brought thee here, my child !—Thou ne'er before
Didst follow me.

MARIAN.

I came to look for thee ;
And to persuade thee to come home with me.
Thou tremblest—Thou art pale—as livid as
The lightning ! Dost thou hear ? 'Tis every where !
Not the clouds only, but the very air—
The very sea—the very earth—do thunder !
All—all is din and fire ! It is right
For man to tremble !

ROBERT.

'Tis not that !

MARIAN.

What then ?

ROBERT.

I took thee for thy mother, Marian !

MARIAN.

Think me her still, and what she'd have thee do,
Do, by the love thou still dost bear to her !
Forswear this lawless life !—Thou wouldst not rob
A living man !—'Tis manlier to strip
The living than the dead !

ROBERT.

This night's the last !

MARIAN.

This night !—O, no !—The last night be the last !
Who makes his mind up that a thing is wrong,
Yet says he'll do that thing for the last time,
Doth but commence anew a course of sin,
Of which that last sin is the leading one,
Which many another, and a worse, will follow !
At once begin ! How many, at this hour
Alive as thou art, will not live to see
To-morrow's light !—If thou shouldst be cut off !
Should thy last sin be done on thy last night !
Should Heaven avenge itself on that last sin
Thou dost repentingly !—My father, come !
O ! a bad conscience, and a sudden death !
Come home !—Come home !—Come home !

ROBERT.

I'll follow thee.
I'll fetch my boat-hook, and my other gear,
And follow thee.

[Exit.

MARIAN.

I'll loiter till you come.

[Goes slowly out.

Enter NORRIS cautiously.

NORRIS.

Now is the time ! Now, while her back's to me.
Is he dead ? There's warmth methinks about the heart,
More than there should be ! 'Tis no matter ! Cowards
May stick at trifles ?—Can I find a stone
To knock him on the head ?—What's this ?—a knife !
'Tis Robert's !

MARIAN re-appearing and ascending the cliff.

MARIAN.

What's that you are doing, father ?

NORRIS.

She takes me for her father !—Good ! She'll see
What I'll do, and think it is her father does it.
And when 'tis done, so will I slink away,
She can't discover her mistake !—Now for it !

[He plunges the knife into the body—Marian utters a faint shriek, and falls senseless.]

She saw it ! She is in my power ! She's mine !
I'll hence and watch my time.

Re-enter ROBERT.

ROBERT.

To leave it there !
And the last time ! There's treasure—I did feel it
Hard, hard and bulky ! Marian is away !

[Goes to the body, and empties one pocket.]

What have we here ? Some of the bright broad pieces
Black Norris show'd me ! What a folly 'twere
To leave them in the pockets of the dead,
And let the living go with empty ones !

I'll count them by and by !—and this is full !

[*Empties the other pocket.*]

I'll ease it of its burthen !—Gold ! All Gold !

Whence* comes that glare ! Ha !—"Tis the beacon
struck

By the lightning, and on fire !

Enter suddenly, AMBROSE, PHILIP, and others.

AMBROSE.

What do you there,
Old Robert ?

ROBERT.

Nothing that I fear to do.

AMBROSE.

What hold you in your hand ?

ROBERT.

Gold !

AMBROSE.

Gold ?

ROBERT.

Ay, Gold !

PHILIP.

Let's look at the body !—What is here—a knife ?

AMBROSE.

A knife !

PHILIP.

A knife !—fast in the dead man's breast !

AMBROSE.

Pull it out !

PHILIP.

'Tis Robert's knife !—How came this, Robert ?
He is confounded !—See !—he cannot speak.

AMBROSE.

Look ! What white thing is that, that's lying yonder ?

PHILIP.

It is his daughter,—she has slipp'd her foot
And fallen—or swoons with horror of the deed
Perhaps she saw him do. E'er since the storm
Came on, has she been ranging up and down
In search of him.

AMBROSE.

Look to her ! Take her home !
For him, we must bestow him somewhere till
To morrow ; and by turns keep watch upon him.
How like a guilty man he looks ! Come on !
Who ever thought to bring it to his door ! [Exeunt.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The inside of a hut.

ROBERT *discovered pacing to and fro.*

ROBERT.

A Murderer!—I, that do sicken at
The sight of blood, to do the deed of blood!
A murderer! and with a hand as free
From blood as an infant's!—To be tried for it!
Condemned, perhaps, and executed!—I!—
That never did it!—Then my branded name,
That don't deserve the brand, and, worse than all,
To leave it to my child—my Marian!
My fair young girl!—Good!—Good!—whom Heaven did
send
To save her father, but he would not heed her—
Turned a deaf ear unto an angel's lips,
To listen to that devil, the greed of pelf!
That was my crime indeed—but only that;
Some one has circumvented me, but who?
Black Norris? Him or Wolf do I suspect—
But what's suspicion only?—Not a thread
To bind a man with.

Enter NORRIS.

NORRIS.

Robert.

ROBERT.

Is it you,
Black Norris?

NORRIS.

Yes, 'tis I—Black Norris, as
You call me—come to cheer you.

ROBERT.

Well, black Norris?

NORRIS.

I don't believe you did that murder.

ROBERT.

No?

NORRIS.

Some one has got the better of you—laid
A trap for you, and caught you—who—Heaven knows!
I say, I don't believe you guilty, but
Appearances are all against you—caught
Stripping the body, with the gold in your hand,
And your knife sticking in the dead man's breast!

ROBERT.

Who stuck it there?

NORRIS.

Why, how should I tell?

ROBERT. [*catching hold of Norris.*]

Nay,
Who stuck it there?

NORRIS.

Not I,
Nor any one I know!—Take off thy hands,

Old man !—I did not come to wrestle with thee ;
Wish'd I to play a game, I'd tackle to
With tougher sinews !—For another end
I came—to tell thee 'tis my turn to watch,
And, hast thou goods to run, the coast is clear—
Now, grip me by the throat.

ROBERT.

Forgive me, Norris.

NORRIS.

Forgive thee !—Fiddlestick !—Offend me first,
Then ask me to forgive thee. Here is gold
For that they took away from thee.—Away !
Make straight for the East coast !—Take shipping there,
And where thou settlest, advertise me !—Go !—

ROBERT. [*going, stops short.*]

My child ! I had forgot her—seek her, seek
And bring her to me ! I can't fly from death
Without my child !—I can't forsake my child !

NORRIS.

Forsake thy child !—a stranger now to her
Availeth more than thou. What are the dead
Unto the living ?—Nothing !—Not the worth
Of a wheaten straw—that helps to make a light !
You can make nothing of the dead.—If you thirst—
Hunger—go naked—suffer any thing,
You may for them ! There's help in a live mouse
More than a dead man ! What else art thou ?
Accus'd of that, the man that doeth which
The law condemns to die.—Escape the law—
And then talk of thy Marian.

ROBERT.

No more ;
Thou madden'st me !

NORRIS.

I tell thee what thou know'st
Must be ! and, sooth to say, though a rough man,
I have no desire to see thee die the death !
Who meets it bravest, but puts on a mask
Which only proves the agony 'twould hide,
When at the hangman's touch, the sweat drop starts
On the bold brow, so seeming calm ; and the blood
Flies to the heart, and leaves the valiant cheek,
That would be thought to smile, without a drop
To vouch for it !

ROBERT.

Thou harrow'st me, good Norris.

NORRIS.

Yet what I tell, thou know'st ! What must it be
When a reprieve at the last point has kill'd ?
I knew a man who narrowly escap'd.
To think of what he told me, even now
Makes me breathe thick, and from my crown to my sole
Sets my flesh tingling ; and all o'er my skin
Spreads the chill, clammy, heavy dew of death !
What at the sight of the huge, living mass
Of human faces all upturn'd he felt
As doth a living man, suppose he lay
Beside a corpse ; for such, he said, he seem'd
To be unto himself. How he did freeze,
At the heat of the sun, with the thought of the grave !
How life
Did stare on him from every thing around him !
Fields, houses, walls, stones—yea, the grisly frame
He stood on, his last footing-place in the world !
And he alone a spectacle of death !
The process then—

ROBERT.

Leave off!—I choke!—I fly!—
The door is fast!

NORRIS.

Thy fear hath shot the bolt!
You see 'tis open!

ROBERT. [*taking his handkerchief from his neck.*]

Give my Marian this,
And be a friend to her.

NORRIS.

I will.

ROBERT.

My child!

NORRIS.

Soon as the seas are cross'd, what hinders her
Take ship, and follow thee?

ROBERT.

Thou'lt see to that?

NORRIS.

I will.

ROBERT.

My blessing on thee, Norris!

NORRIS.

Nay!—

ROBERT.

Thou'rt the preserver of my life—and all
That makes it life to me! As thou to me
Art good, may Heaven prove good to thee! Thy face
Why dost thou turn away?

NORRIS.

I do not like
That any see me weep.—I had as lief
Be hang'd as thank'd. My watch is nearly spent,
The quarter of an hour, and 'tis the span
In which thy coil of life doth lie.—Make haste!
Why dost thou stand bewilder'd thus? Look, Robert!
There is the door!—A minute more 'tis lock'd!
Choose on which side on't thou wilt then be found.

ROBERT.

I take thy proffer, Norris!

NORRIS.

If thou breath'st
Another word of thanks!—

ROBERT.

I won't!—You'll not
Forget my child?—You'll be a father to her?
Swear thou wilt be a father to my child!

NORRIS.

You note my hand is on the key,

ROBERT.

Don't turn it!
I am gone!—I fly!—My Marian!—My Marian!
[*Rushes out.*]

NORRIS.

My Marian!—An open window. Ay!
Now a fast door. Who's there?

WOLF. [*outside.*]

'Tis I.

Enter WOLF.

NORRIS.

What, Wolf?
Come in! He's off!—he's fled!—Art sorry, man?

I'm not much prone to pity ; yet had as lief
A man that's innocent should escape as die.

WOLF.

That's innocent !

NORRIS.

Thou fool ! Hast known me still
Thy master in all kinds of craftness,
Could buy and sell thee, and believ'st thou yet
He murder'd him ?

WOLF.

Who did it then ?

NORRIS.

By my troth
Thou hast no stomach for a deed of blood !
Thy own seems spill'd at only thought of one !
'Sdeath ! Is't a frost, man, that thy cheek's so white,
And thou dost shiver so ? " Who did it then ?"
No one ! There's fire to warm thee ! Be thyself !

WOLF.

The knife was taken from his breast.

NORRIS.

It was !
What ails thy teeth to make them chatter so ?
Want'st meat, or drink, or sleep, or what ? " The knife
Was taken from his breast ! " What then ? The knife
Found nothing there it could not find within
A six weeks' buried corpse ! Furies and death !
Believ'st me not—or tak'st me for a ghost,
That thou dost gaze me thus with mouth agape ?
Listen ! Whilst he was gone to fetch his gear,
Lay further down the beach, did I come up,
Find the wreck'd seaman, dead—I tell thee dead !
'Sdeath, won't believe me still ?—Searching for some-
thing

Would leave a mark might serve as evidence
That violence had been done—my hand by chance
Lit on his knife, he had dropp'd—on Robert's knife !—
When didst thou get the ague ? What a fit !—
I say by chance I lit on Robert's knife,
For which this hand of mine—not Robert's, as
Thou thought'st—Thou dog-fish ! How I laugh at thee !—
Did find the sheath wherein thou saw'st it sticking.
Why thou wilt shake thee out of joint ; what heeds
A dead man's breast a knife, more than a pincushion
A pin !

WOLF. [*stammering.*]

The body !

NORRIS.

What of it ?
Is it tied to thee ? Art in the death grip of
The drowned man ? I would not think thee, Wolf,
A chicken heart, yet never saw I man
That look'd more like a coward ! Couldst thou see
Thyself and look at me !—What of the body ?
Did it rise up, and walk, or run, or caper,
Or offer thee a hand to shake, or talk,
Or trol a song to thee ? What did the body
To make thee marvel like a man demented ?
Tell me that I may play the madman too !

WOLF.

Pray Heaven thou go'st not mad in earnest !

NORRIS.

Man !

Wolf !—Have a care—don't take me for a child
Because thyself art one ! Thou wouldst not say
That life was in the body ? It was warm
About the heart !—(*aside.*)—Sit down, good Wolf, sit
down,
Recover thee a little. Tell thy tale

Thy own way. For I see there's something—come—
Go on—the body?

WOLF.

I return'd to it
When thou and all the rest were gone, to search
If treasure were about it. It was bleeding!
I thought it strange, for not a drop did follow
When first they drew the knife out; and I fancied
Life must be in it still—and so it was!
I felt the heart beat slow and dull—mine own.
Methought would stop!

NORRIS.

Kept the blood flowing still?

WOLF.

It did—more free; and as it flow'd, the heart
More full and quick did beat.

NORRIS.

It had been wrong
To stop the blood.

WOLF.

I didn't!—I did mind
Nothing but the heart, which now beat stronger still,
Until methought the chest began to heave,
And so it did! And presently I heard
A gurgling in the throat of the shipwreck'd man,
And I began to freeze, expecting now
To hear the body speak.

NORRIS.

Did it?

WOLF.

Almost!
A sound between a murmur and a moan.

NORRIS.

Was it repeated ?

WOLF.

Yes ; but very faint.

NORRIS.

Any more ?

WOLF,

Yes ; fainter though at every time ;
And now the heart beat faint, and presently
Came a slight shivering o'er the body—then
A sigh—and nothing more—the soul had fled.

NORRIS.

I thought 'twas over warm about the heart !

WOLF.

O Norris, say it not !

NORRIS.

What did I say ?

WOLF.

You thought 'twas over warm about the heart.

NORRIS.

Well !—Of what value is a spark of life,
More than a spark of any other thing ?

WOLF.

The body was thy father's !

NORRIS.

Devil !—Imp
Of Hell ! Unsay it, or thou diest with
A lie in thy throat.

WOLF.

Were it my last breath, Norris,
I speak the truth.

NORRIS.

Who else has heard it from thee?

WOLF.

No one.

NORRIS.

I am mad!—No wonder if I am!
Wretch! hadst thou stopped the old man's blood—

WOLF.

He had liv'd.
I thought thy interest 'twas that he should die.
I knew not then it was thy father.

NORRIS.

Devil!
Why had I any thing to say to thee;
And where's the body now?

WOLF.

I left it where
I found it.

NORRIS.

Fool!—Thou shouldst have carried it
To the cliff, and cast it straight into the sea,
Where ne'er the sand is dry.

WOLF.

Would not the sea
Have thrown it up again?

NORRIS.

The sea?—The earth,
Though it were buried in't ten fathom deep,

Would throw it up again!—Nothing can make
A grave that's deep enough to keep it.—Cast
A mountain on 't, 'twould heave it off.—They'll know it
When it is brought before the coroner.

WOLF.

I have taken care of that.

NORRIS.

Mangled the features?

WOLF.

Yes.

NORRIS.

Savage!—

WOLF.

For thy sake I did it.

NORRIS.

True!

Right—you did very right—and after all,
What was it but a mere piece of clay?—Now, Wolf,
Where wouldst thou be?

WOLF.

Why, any where but here!—

NORRIS.

Wilt cross the sea?—Thou hadst a hand, thou know'st,
In the murder—Thou did'st finish it—Thou lett'st
The old man die—He were not murder'd else—
Wilt cross the sea?—I'll give thee gold enough
To pay thy passage wheresoe'er thou'lt go,
And set thee down there as a man,—and more,
If more thou want'st—Wilt cross the sea?

WOLF.

I will.

NORRIS.

When wilt thou start ?—To-morrow ?

WOLF.

Yes.

NORRIS.

At dawn ?

WOLF.

At dawn !

NORRIS.

That's good !—That's excellent !—I'm much
Beholden to thee, Wolf—Thou'rt a true friend—
Go far—Go very far !—The more apart
The better ! Stop not at a thousand miles—
Or two—or three !—Look, Wolf ! I have a jar
Buried in the garden, full of treasure—Take it,
And luck go with you !—You will start to-morrow ?
At dawn ?—Take passage to a distant land,
Will you not ?—Thank you ! Thank you, Wolf ! I'll
ne'er
Forget you !—never cease to be your friend ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*The inside of Robert's Cottage.**Enter MARIAN.*

MARIAN.

My father's house ! O would it were indeed
My father's house, as I did know it once.
I were content to be a wrecker's child !
But now I have a feeling as all things

Did loathe me!—e'en the threshold which from childhood
I have been used to pass.—I entered it
With doubt, as though I cross'd it 'gainst its will;
The very bed I have slept in every night
For eighteen years, did seem to say to me,
“Lie on the floor.”—And when in agony
I threw myself upon the floor, I shrank,
As that did spurn me too, and cry to me,
“Thou art the daughter of a murderer!”—
Me, that when household use required the life
Of a poor brainless bird, would run a mile
To get some other hand to take it, nor
Could even then look on. But where is nature?
She has been scared away, but now returns.
O my poor father.—O my luckless father!
My hapless, guilty father.—Will the day
Never more break? I only wait for it
To seek for him, and comfort him, and tell him
That I am still his child—his Marian.

ROBERT. [*rushing in.*]

ROBERT.

My Marian!—What! Hold'st thou back from me?

MARIAN.

No.

ROBERT.

But thou dost.

MARIAN.

No!—No!—See there—I have thrown
My arms around thy neck.

ROBERT.

Yes!—but you turn
Your head away.

MARIAN.

Is 't turn'd away now ?

ROBERT.

No !

But where's the kiss you never met me but
You printed on my cheek ?—

MARIAN.

There !

ROBERT.

Humph !—I fear
I have thrown away both time and risk—I came
To seek my daughter—but she is not here—
She has gone from me !—deserted me !—I have lost her.

MARIAN.

No !—No !

ROBERT.

You know her ?—fetch me her,—make haste !

MARIAN.

She's here !

ROBERT.

She's not !—she's any where but here !
And I am here at peril of my life
To see her for a minute e'er I go
Perhaps for ever from her.

MARIAN.

O my father !

I am indeed thy child !—thy Marian !

ROBERT.

These tears are something like her ; I begin
To think that thou'rt my child—Thou art my child !
Thou hast heard it ?

MARIAN.

Yes.

ROBERT.

What ponderous thing is "Yes,"
To take a sigh like that to heave it off?

MARIAN.

Thou art in danger.

ROBERT.

Great! To-morrow, may be,
A dungeon! there, most certainly the dock!
There, in all likelihood, the gibbet! but
I have a chance—that chance is now! 'Tis little!
And, every moment that I lose, grows less!
But I'm content it should go all—ay all!
If I have lost one fraction of my child
That's due to me—go all—and let it go!

MARIAN.

I am all thy own—thy own hand not thy own
More than thy Marian!—Thou'rt in flight!—We'll fly
Together!

ROBERT. [*re-assured.*]

No, but thou shalt follow me,
And speedily!—Think kindly of Black Norris!—
He set me free—He'll be a friend to thee—
He furnish'd me with means of flight.

MARIAN.

With means?

[*Marian goes out, and returns with a little purse.*]

Here, father, here; 'tis little; but a mite
Is a mountain if 'tis wanting when 'tis needed!

ROBERT.

Part of thy little store ?

MARIAN.

The rest's at sea,
Would it were here !—Its absence now is loss
Which, though it come a score times doubled back,
It never can repair !

ROBERT.

And thou, my child ?

MARIAN.

I have hands !—There's Heaven !—O father !

ROBERT.

Dost thou think
Thy father guilty ?

MARIAN.

I think nothing now
Except that thou'rt in danger.

ROBERT.

Marian,
I no more did the deed——

MARIAN.

They will be here,
And then thou art lost !

ROBERT.

Thou dost not think me guilty ?

MARIAN.

What matter what thy Marian thinks, when death
Pursues thee, and thou lingerest here, and not
One moment am I certain but the next

It may o'ertake thee—here!—in thy own house!
That's now no shelter for thee—here!—before
Thy Marian's eyes that cannot help thee!—Fly!
Thy life perhaps may pay for the next breath
Thou drawest here!—The thought distracts me!—Fly!

ROBERT.

It cannot be thou think'st me guilty?

MARIAN.

Fly!

Terror doth take away my senses—Fly!

ROBERT.

I do begin to doubt thou think'st me guilty?

MARIAN.

O father, fly!

ROBERT.

I am innocent.

MARIAN.

'Tis well!

ROBERT.

It is not well—I am innocent. I'll swear it!

MARIAN.

Thou need'st not, father—Don't!—Fly!—Fly!—

ROBERT.

By—

MARIAN.

Stop!—

ROBERT.

Thou think'st me guilty!—Spare thy kindness—There!

Perish thy coin ! I will not use it !—Fly !—
Do any thing to save my life !—If it goes
It may go !—Here I'll sit !—E'en here ! Ay here !
Here in the cottage thou wast born in, nurs'd,
Brought up in—'till now thou'rt eighteen years, and now
Dost tell thy father he's a murderer !
Here I'll wait for them—Let them come and take me !
Take me before thine eyes !—Imprison me !
Try me and hang me ! I'll not turn my hand
To save my life ! since my own child that knows me
Believes me guilty. I am guilty !—Yes !
Let all the world beside believe me so.

AMBROSE. [*without.*]

What, ho !

ROBERT.

They come !

MARIAN.

Fly by the other door !

ROBERT.

You hear ! It is beset.

MARIAN.

Hide somewhere !

ROBERT.

Where !
They'll search the house !—Were there a hundred doors,
And all were free—were there a cavern, where
No foot could follow me—I would sit here
And let them take me !

AMBROSE.

Robert !

ROBERT. [*opens the door.*]

Here !—Come in !

MARIAN.

For mercy's sake !—

ROBERT.

For no sake !—Here I am,
Take me !

MARIAN.

My father !

ROBERT.

I am guilty.

MARIAN.

Nay !—

ROBERT.

She says I am—take me away !

MARIAN.

Oh ! stay !

Don't take him yet !—Good friends !—you are neigh-
bours !—don't,

Don't take away my father !—leave him with me !

Pray—pray don't take him !

ROBERT.

I am guilty—take me !

I am guilty !—Ask my child—my Marian !

MARIAN.

Don't !—Don't !—Stay ! Mercy ! Mercy ! O my fa-
ther !

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A waiting room.

Enter AMBROSE and PHILIP.

AMBROSE.

He is committed, and I pity him !
To be condemned on the evidence
Of his own daughter ! 'Tis unnatural
To take away the life that gave us life !
This comes of learning !—Had it been a child
Of yours, or mine, what heed would she have taken
Of a false oath to save a father's life ?
Her mother was a sort of lady—ay,
The daughter of a broken gentleman,
Took up his quarters in the cottage, while
Old Robert's father liv'd. They fell in love,
And at the father's death they married.

PHILIP.

So
Did come her lady breeding.

AMBROSE.

Even so
She, as her mother did before, it seems
Doth quarrel with the freedom that we take

With dead men's gear ; and to the beach must needs
Follow her father. She had better far
Have sought her death, for what a curse must now
Her life be to her ! Was't not strange she fainted
Soon as her evidence was done, and yet
Could give that evidence ?

PHILIP.

Here comes old Robert.

Enter ROBERT between two constables, followed by men and women.—NORRIS in the back ground.

ROBERT.

I am innocent ! I am murder'd ! My own child
Has sworn my life away ! My Marian !
Falsely—most falsely ! When they try me, 'tis
By her I die ; not by the judge, the jury,
Or any one but her ! She gives the verdict !
Passes the sentence !—puts my limbs in irons !
Casts me into my dungeon !—drags me thence
To the scaffold !—is my executioner !
Does all that puts her father in his grave
Before his time ! Her father, good to her
Whate'er he was to others. Oh ! to have died
By any evidence but mine own child's !
Take me to prison.

FIRST CONSTABLE.

No, we are waiting for
The order of committal.

MARIAN. [*rushing in.*]

O, my father !

ROBERT.

Thy father ?—Am I so ? I prithee, girl,
Call me that name again ! It is a thing
Too good to be believed !

MARIAN.

What, father ?

ROBERT.

What ?

Why, to be father to so good a child !

MARIAN.

So good a child ?

ROBERT.

So good a child ! I say it

Again ! So good a child ! Come, look at me !

Give me thy hand, the other one, and look

Full in my face ! And fix thine eyes on mine !

As I do live, thou canst !—And yet canst lie

To call me father ! Thou'rt no child of mine !

[Casts her from him, she falls on her knees.]

MARIAN.

My father !

ROBERT.

Up ! or I will trample on thee !

Fasten my hands in thy dark silken hair,

And lift thee up by it, and fling thee from me !

Who gave thee those fine locks ?

MARIAN.

Thou ! Thou !

ROBERT.

Who gave thee

Those hands thou clasp'st to me ?

MARIAN.

Thou !

ROBERT.

I!—Indeed!

And the rest of thy limbs? Thy body? and the tongue
Thou speak'st with—Owest thou every thing to me?

MARIAN.

I do!—indeed I do!

ROBERT.

Indeed! Indeed!

Thou liest! Thou wert never child of mine!
No! No! I never carried thee up and down
The beach in my arms, many and many a day,
To strengthen thee when thou wast sickly! No!
I never brought thee from the market town,
Whene'er I went to it, a pocket load
Of children's gear! No! No, I never was
Your play-fellow that ne'er fell out with you
Whate'er you did to him! No! Never! Nor
When fever came into the village, and
Fix'd its fell gripe on you, I never watch'd
Ten days and nights running, beside your bed,
Living I know not how, for sleep I took not,
And hardly food! And since your mother died—

MARIAN.

Thou'lt kill me, father!

ROBERT.

Since your mother died
I have not been a mother and a father
Both—both to thee!

MARIAN.

O! spare me!

ROBERT.

I was never
Any thing to thee!—Call me father!—why

A father's life is wrapp'd up in his child !
Was mine wrapp'd up in thee ?—Thou know'st 'twas
not !—

How durst thou call me father ?—fasten upon me !—
That never gave thee proof, sign, any thing
Of recognition that thou wast my child !
Strain'd thee to my heart by the hour !—parting thy
hair

And smoothing it, and calling thee all things
That fondness idolizing thinks upon
To speak its yearning love !—core of my heart !
Drop of my heart's blood, was worth all the rest !
Apple of mine eye, for which I'd give mine eyes,
Orbs, sockets, lids and all !—'till words grew sobs,
And love, o'erfraught, put what it lov'd away
To get relief from tears !—Never d'd I
Do this to thee !—Why call me father, then,
That art no child of mine ?

MARIAN.

I am thy child ?
The child to whom thou didst all this and more.

ROBERT.

Thou stood'st not then, just now, in the witness box,
Before the justice in that justice room,
And swor'st my life away.

MARIAN.

Where thou dost say,
I stood !—What thou dost say, I did !—and yet,
Not in those hours thou nam'st of fond endearment,
Felt, as I felt it then, thou wast my father !

ROBERT.

Well !—Justify it—prove thee in the right—
Make it a lawful thing—a natural thing—

The act of a child !—a good child !—a true child !
An only one !—one parent in the grave,
The other left—that other, a fond father—
A fond, old, doting, idolizing father !
Approve it such an act in such a child
To slay that father ! Come !

MARIAN.

An oath !—an oath !

ROBERT.

Thy father's life !

MARIAN.

Thy daughter's soul !

ROBERT.

'Twere well
Thy lip had then a little of the thing
The heart had over much of !

MARIAN.

What ?

ROBERT.

Stone !—Rock !
They never should have opened !

MARIAN.

Silence had
Condemned thee equally.

ROBERT.

But not the breath
Mine own life gave !

MARIAN.

I felt in the justice-room
As if the final judgment-day were come,

And not a hiding-place my heart could find
To screen a thought or wish ; but every one
Stood naked 'fore the judge, as now my face
Stands before you ! All things did vanish, father !
That make the interest and substance up
Of human life—which, from the mighty thing
That once was all in all, was shrunk to nothing,
As by some high command my soul received,
And could not but obey, it did cast off
All earthly ties, which, with their causes, melted
Away !—And I saw nothing but the Eye
That seeth all, bent searchingly on mine,
And my lips oped as not of their own will,
But of a stronger—I saw nothing then
But that all-seeing Eye—but now I see
Nothing but my father !

*[She rushes towards him, and throws her arms
round his neck.]*

ROBERT.

Hold off ! thou adder !
Sting me, and think to coil about me still
With thy loathsome folds ! Think I will suffer thee !
Not grasp thee !—pluck thee from me ! dash thee to
The earth !

MARIAN.

Oh, no !

ROBERT.

Unloose thy coil !—my flesh
Creeps at thee. Hear'st thou ? Come—let go thy hold,
Or I will do some violence to thee !

MARIAN.

Do !

ROBERT.

Strike thee !

MARIAN.

Do !—Dead—Dead—'twere merciful.

ROBERT.

No ; suffer thee to live that thou may'st see
My execution.

MARIAN.

Oh, is it thy child
Thou speakest to ?

ROBERT.

Let go, or I will curse thee ?

MARIAN.

Do ! so thou sufferest me to cling to thee !
O, can you think I swore it with my will !
That I—thy child—thy Marian—all my life
Good to thee—was I not ?—and loving to thee !
Dost not believe I love thee ? What ! that I—
Who'd suffer torture—death—ten thousand deaths,
To save thy life—would swear thy life away
Willingly ? willingly ? Oh in my heavy strait,
To be an instrument of justice 'gainst thee,
That makes me wish—and I do wish it—thou
Hadst never given me being ! Bear not thus
Unbearably hard upon thy child !
Thy child, as ever ! Whatsoe'er she did !
Whatsoe'er thou hast done ! That loves thee—dotes
Upon thee ! honours—idolizes thee,
As e'er did child her father.

ROBERT.

Let me go !
Or as I'm here—and am a murder'd man—
Murder'd by thee ; I'll curse thee—let me go !

THIRD BAILIFF. [*entering with a paper, which he gives to—
First Bailiff.*]

The order of committal.

MARIAN. [*to Bailiff.*]

Stop!—a minute!

ROBERT.

Or loose thy hold, or bide my curse!

MARIAN.

My mother!

That is in her grave—who gave me to thee—gave me,
When she had bless'd me on her death-bed, saying
“Be mother, now, and father to our child!”—
For her sake, father! Am I not by her
Enough an orphan—would I think you would
Be more an orphan than I am?

ROBERT,

Away!

MARIAN.

Both—both my parents lose?

ROBERT,

May—

MARIAN. [*shrieks.*]

Don't curse me—but I cannot let thee go!

[*Exeunt.*]

NORRIS. [*coming forward.*]

Hold on, old Robert. That's the mood. Hold on!
Rail at her! Spurn her! Curse her! Drive her mad!
The more she's fit for me. Use thy own flesh
Like carrion! Foot it from thee! Loathe it! I'm
The bird will banquet on't—a father's blood

Must not be shed—although unwittingly—
For nothing! That's the price which I have paid
For her dark hair, white skin, and shapely limbs;
Her lady face and fairly rounded form!
And I will have them—nor do prize them less
Because her heart would give them to another!
In that's the feast of hate, to taste the joy
That's purchas'd at the cost of those we hate!
When I confess I put the trick upon him
He is free! My motive—love for his fair child
Absolves me. Then the flight I had prepar'd—
And his own rashness marr'd—is proof enough;
His absence was my aim, and not his death!
They will but chide me, and, at worst, will say
“The scheme was daring! Yet a lover's one!”
Between her father's life—my rival's hopes—
She will not pause to choose, but vindicate
At once a daughter's duty, and her love,
And so be mine.

Enter STEPHEN.

Whither so fast, good Stephen?—

STEPHEN.

Where is my master?

NORRIS.

Fast in prison!

STEPHEN.

Where
His daughter?

NORRIS.

Thou hast news,—and it is bad!

STEPHEN.

It is!—Young Edward's ship is cast away

Upon the coast of France, and all the crew,
 'Tis said, have perish'd !

NORRIS.

Know'st thou what thou say'st ?

STEPHEN.

As thou that hear'st me say it !

NORRIS.

All the crew ?

STEPHEN.

All !

NORRIS.

And thou art in search of Marian
 To tell her this ?

STEPHEN.

I am.

NORRIS.

I'll bring thee to her.
 How I do wonder at the news, I know—
 Which I myself have spread ! I'll bring thee to her.
[Exit.

SCENE II.

The outside of a prison.

MARIAN *before the gate, half reclining on the ground.*

MARIAN.

Here is my death-bed. Here I'll stretch myself
 And yield my spirit up, for I do feel

I am about to die. I could have borne
The shame of the misdeed that was not mine—
Submitted to it, as the will of Heaven,
Incurring which I had not broke its will—
But that the tie of nature should have snapp'd
Along with that of reverence for Heaven—
That where I found all love—all safeguard once—
I find all loathing—all desertion now,
That is too hard to bear. No kind of shame
That ever made the cheek to redden, while
The heart was free, had made me shrink from him—
Mocks, scorns, repulses, nor annoyances—
I would have cleav'd to him amid the lightnings
Of blasting looks and voices, thundering scorns!
Shared the dark penance of his dungeon with him!
Walk'd with him to the place of execution!
Mounted it step by step along with him!
And, all around him lowering, shone upon him,
Till his last look, with reverence and love!
They shall not shut me from his prison! have
No right! I am his child! They should not heed
His anger 'gainst me which they do not share,
But I do bear it all. Nor care how high
The surf doth run. It cannot wax so fierce
But I will cleave it rather than remain
Upon this desolate and dreary shore!
Within! within! Who keeps the gate?

Enter JAILOR.

JAILOR.

What want you?

MARIAN.

Admittance to my father!

JAILOR.

'Tis forbid.

MARIAN.

Open the door a little—do, good sir,
And let me speak with you—give me but a chink
I'll pass through it! [*Jailor opens the gate, she tries to
pass it, but is prevented. They advance struggling.*]

JAILOR.

What mean you? Are you mad?

MARIAN.

I am! The fury all, without the trance
That makes it bearable! The horror of
The dream, without the sleep. Do you know aught
About the ties of nature? Have you look'd
Upon a living father, mother, brother,
Or sister—or upon a living child
That was your own? I have a living father,
And he's within that prison—and I'm here
His living child, and yearn to go to him!
And you say I cannot. Can you say it? Will you?
Do you? You do not! Cannot! Will not! Oh,
Admit me to my father!

JAILOR.

What's the use?
He'll only drive thee from him!

MARIAN.

Let me in!
I'll find the use. Oh, do you think his heart
Could turn to stone in a moment? Harden so
To the very core, and 'gainst his only child?
Admit me and you'll see it still is flesh;
All flesh—all beating flesh, and at the core
Its inmost—tenderest—warmest part—his child!

JAILOR.

Poor girl!

MARIAN.

You pity me!—Oh, show me pity then—
The act of pity—without which, with all
Its melting looks and tones, its sighs and tears,
’Tis useless as a very beggar, who
Gives all things but the needed thing—relief!
You say, “Poor girl!” and you say true! To be
An orphan!—to be friendless!—shelterless!
To go in rags, and they in tatters! Hang
From morn till morn—from week’s end unto week’s end,
’Twixt sustenance and starvation!—All of these
Together but a little sprinkling make
Of suffering to the torrent hurl’d on me!
I can’t stand under it much longer—now!
My reason totters!—reels! Another moment
I’m a lunatic—O save me from the jacket,
The straw—the whip—the chain—open the door!
Admit me to my father!

JAILOR.

It is hard
To have no option but the act of duty,
When the heart bleeds, and that decides against it.
Poor girl. Though I consort with stone and iron,
My heart partakes not so of their condition
That I can see and hear thee with such eyes
And ears, as walls and bars do turn to misery.
Thou must endure—and Heaven support thee under it.
All are denied admittance to his cell,
And thou, I grieve to say it, first of all. [Going.]

MARIAN. [*stopping him.*]

Stay. Let me stop at the door of his cell—at the end
Of the passage that leads to it—in the court on which
The passage opens—on the stairs—any where
Within the prison—so that I may be
Under one roof with him. Let me stop with you
At the gate.

JAILOR.

It may not be.

MARIAN.

Show me the window of
His cell. Is it that—or that—which is it?

JAILOR.

Neither.

MARIAN.

Is it that then?

JAILOR.

'Tis not in this quarter of
The prison.

MARIAN.

Which quarter then?

JAILOR.

I may not tell thee.
Don't stop me, girl. I can't stay longer with thee.
Thou quite unman'st me.

MARIAN.

Leave the door ajar—
A moment. Let me look into the prison.

[He shuts the door.]

Go—thou dost weep. And think'st thou I'll believe it?
Thou art no better than the grating bolt
That at thy will is shot and holds the door.
I am helpless—hopeless! Would I were the bolt—
Door—walls—bars—any thing but what I am!
And I have put him there—and if he dies,
I hang him! Who are these that look at me
As they would strike me dead? I couldn't help it!
My mother train'd me in the fear of God!

I was forced to do it. Just as well might ye blame
A rock to split, when riven by the lightning,
As my lips to part, when in the name of Heaven
The justice bade them open and speak the truth.
I am innocent—don't spurn me—I am innocent!
[Retreats to the wall, and supports herself against it.]

Enter NORRIS and STEPHEN.

NORRIS.

There—up to her—accost her—tell your news!
What! is it loathing that I feel for her,
Not love? It pleasures me to see her thus.
Except for her I had not done it. That
Is rankling at my heart—sets it in storm!
I'm all for havoc. He should die—But then
It were another murder on my soul.

STEPHEN.

Marian!

MARIAN.

Well, Stephen! What of misery more?
For sure it is your errand, by your looks!
Tell me! You can add nothing to the cup
Already that o'erflows. Is it of Edward?
Is he dead?

STEPHEN.

He is. Drown'd on the coast of France.

MARIAN.

I hear it—and I do not shed a tear,
Nor feel the want to weep! I welcome it!
'Tis good news! He has left a world of woe
To him—to him—for what is woe to me
Were woe to him. Would I a heart I love
As I love his, should feel what mine doth feel?
Would I put adders where I could not bear

To have an insect sting ? 'Tis well he's dead !
The friends he leaves, should put on holiday,
Not mourning clothes for him. His passing bell
Should ring a peal, and not a knell ! 'Tis best
It is as it is. His welcome home had been
"Heaven help you !" not "Heaven bless you !" Well,
he's dead !
How was he drowned ?

STEPHEN.

His ship, they say, went down
With all the crew.

MARIAN.

With all the crew ! He lies
In a watery grave ! How fresh he look'd the day
He went—What hope was in his eye, whose fire
You would have thought would ne'er go out. He seem'd
In speed to meet good fortune, as a friend
Already come in sight—I see him now,
Stepping with gallant air into the boat,
And looking at the sea, as 'twere a thing
Stable as the solid earth ! My sailor lad !
Young, comely, manly, good, and fond of me !
I little thought the look would be my last
Which promised I should see thee soon again.
Thou diest in good time—'tis years of woes
Saved by a minute's pang. I thought just now
I was past weeping ! I did love him—love him
With all my will ! No portion of my heart
But what was given to him—no portion on't
I ever wish'd were back !

NORRIS.

Now is my time,
Marian !

MARIAN.

What! more? Is there more misery?
There's nothing left but death—I do not count
Death misery.

NORRIS.

I come to talk to thee
Of life, not death.

MARIAN.

Where is it? show it me!
Life is the opposite of death—a thing
To be preferred to it—show me that life—
For if thou mean'st such life as now I see
I had rather die than live!

NORRIS.

I love thee, Marian.

MARIAN.

Does any one love Marian?

NORRIS.

I repeat
I love thee, Marian; wilt thou marry me?

MARIAN.

Marry thee? Yes; when they put on for me
My wedding clothes—my shroud!—and lay me in
My bridal bed—my grave! Then I'll be wife
To thee or any one!

NORRIS.

What wouldst thou do
To save thy father's life?

MARIAN.

Any thing.

NORRIS.

What
To have it proved that he is innocent ?

MARIAN.

Any thing ! pay the felon's penalty
Myself !—Abide the gibbet ! Marry thee
Now—now !—If now thou didst heave off for me
That mountain on my heart—my father's plight !
That, heavier on my soul—my father's sin !
This didst thou do—and stood my lover there,
Of whom to say that in his grave he's dearer
Than he was ever when in life to me,
Is to say truth—I'd give to thee my hand.

NORRIS.

I take it !—
What ! draw'st thou back ?

MARIAN.

'Tis but to pause a moment !
No !—I'll see nothing but my father !—Think
There's no one else in the world !—I'll see but him
And the plight he lies in !—deeper—lonelier
Than shipman at the bottom of the sea !
Canst thou do this thou sayest ?

NORRIS.

Yes !

MARIAN.

Thou'lt save
My father's life ? Thou'lt prove him innocent ?

NORRIS.

I will !

MARIAN.

The day thou dost it—I am thine !

NORRIS.

Give me thy hand upon it ! Draw'st thou back
Again ?

MARIAN.

No ! There ! One moment ! Edward !—There !

[*Faints in his arms.*

END OF ACT IV.

A C T V .

SCENE I.

*The Shore.**Enter NORRIS.*

NORRIS.

It is a miracle how things that seem
The most perverse, do work unto mine ends !
Entanglement doth set me free as fast
As it doth catch me ! His committal, which
I thought had marred me, makes me ! He is free !
Hard swearing ope'd at last his dungeon door.
They threatened me with his place, but I escaped
With chiding, and fair Marian is mine,
And this the day I go with her to church !
I would it were to any other place !
I dreamed of her last night. I thought it was
Our wedding day, and, to the church door I
Was leading her. 'Twas shut ! I knocked at it.
One answered from within, " I must not enter !"
And I did shudder, for I knew the voice.
And yet again I knocked. When ope'd the door,
And, fear congealing sight ! a spectre glared
Upon me ! 'Twas my father ! It did say,
" It is forbid—thou must not enter here !"
I woke. It was the first night I had slept,
To call it sleep, since that unlucky night.
O ! may I never sleep such sleep again !

[Exit.

SCENE II.

*Robert's Cottage.**Enter ROBERT.*

ROBERT.

Better I had died! My child has given her life
To cherish mine! Even while I look at her
She wastes away!—and what doth aggravate
The pangs to see her fall a prey to death
So fast, is the sweet uncomplaining patience
With which she bears the tooth that's gnawing her.
Working its way into the quick! She looks
On me, the cause of the inextricable,
Unsufferable strait she has fallen into,
As one to pity rather than to blame!
This is her wedding day!—far better call'd
Her funeral day! I have left no means untried
To tempt him to forego his claim—he cries
“I have paid the price, and what I've bought I'll take!”
While prayers awaken wrath, and not remorse,
And his eye lowers 'till I think I see
His heart, with evil at the very core.
The hour!—I must awaken her. Her eyes
Were clos'd when last I look'd—before the time
I would not have them open on the day
They'll see at last too soon!—She has wak'd of herself!
Is up, and dress'd, and smiling, with a cheek
More kin to death than life!—My Marian!

MARIAN. [*having entered.*]

My father!—what's the matter that you turn
Your eyes away? You falter when you speak!
Father! be cheerful—happy—look upon me!

ROBERT.

My girl, don't smile!

MARIAN.

What my face does, my father,
My heart does!—It is calm!—Yea, cheerful!—not
That it lacks cause for grief—but has more cause
For gladness! I have done what Heaven approves—
My duty! sacrificed a little thing—
Much in itself, but in comparison
Little—to gain a great thing—to preserve
My father's life!—I should smile!—Let me smile,
And smile along with me!

ROBERT.

My child—my child—
That talk'd to me like an angel!—clung to me!
Knelt to me to persuade me to forbear!
And like a fiend I would not heed, but did
The evil thing, whence all this ruin grew!
My child, who loving me, as she truly said,
And since has proved, beyond her life—did keep
Her reverence for Heaven, when lacking that
She might have sav'd me!—My poor child that I
For doing so her duty, as she ought,
Did spurn—did use with violence—did suffer
To trail along the street, hanging to me!—
Whom I was nigh to curse!—I did not, Marian!
Indeed I did not curse thee!—A child so used!—
To blast her happiness—life—every thing
For me—and do it with a smile!

MARIAN.

My father!

No more of this, I beseech thee—these are thoughts
That cannot profit us ! and they awaken
Others, 'twere better for our peace we suffer
To sleep !—For they do madden !—Give me thy hand !
Don't speak !—My brain did reel just now !
'Tis over !—I'll go to the door and see
If he be coming.

ROBERT.

Who ?

MARIAN.

The bridegroom !
Since we're to marry, as well marry now
As any other time—O save me !—Hide me !
[Rushing to her father, hides her face in his breast.]

Enter EDWARD.

EDWARD.

My Marian ! my girl ! my love ! my bride !
And is thy joy to see me back so great
It overcomes thee ?—Marian, from the hour
We hoisted sail to bring me back to thee,
The wind has never veer'd nor flagg'd—We've had
A merry run of good twelve knots an hour !—
Nothing—sheet, halyard—but the helm to 'tend to
As though the vessel with my heart did race,
That still did keep before it !—Turn to me !—
Look at me !—Speak to me !—The face and voice,
I have heard and seen a thousand miles away—
Now that I'm near to thee—within reach of thee—
Touching thee, Marian !—let me see and hear !
Has she not power to speak or move ?

ROBERT.

My boy,—
The sight of thee so sudden is too much for her.

EDWARD.

And does she love me better?—Marian!—
Sweet—constant—fond—could I believe so fond?
'Twas never thus with thee before at meeting!
Unloose the hands that clasp thy father's neck;
Or, let me do it for thee—'till I fold thee
To my fond, my faithful, my adoring heart,
'That yearns to have thee near it! Marian!
Know'st thou not Edward's hand? Does she resist me?
Is it not joy that works upon her so?
Dost my return give pain? Is it a thing
Unwelcome?—Am I loved no longer by her?
Am I forgotten?—

MARIAN.

Edward—no!—no!—no!
'Thou'rt not forgotten.

EDWARD.

No?—Nor lov'd no longer?

MARIAN.

Nor lov'd no longer?—lov'd more dear than ever!
Than ever, Edward!

EDWARD.

Marian! my love!
My life! the ship is on her course again!
Steady! There's nought ahead!—fool that I was
To fancy there were breakers!—Come, my girl!
Sit on my knee and talk to me! 'tis long
Since we have talk'd together, Marian!
Dost thou hold off?—I have been so long away
You are asham'd to sit upon my knee.
Well! There! What you like I like! Though you've sat
Often upon my knee. Well! I have made
My luckiest voyage!—our pence have grown to pounds!

MARIAN.

We heard that you were shipwreck'd !

EDWARD.

Ay !

MARIAN.

Were drowned !

EDWARD.

You took mé for my ghost !—no wonder, girl,
You ran away from me ! Oh now I see !
We've not touch'd ground we did not wish to touch !
Nor shipp'd a sea since first we hoisted sail !
And now we marry, Marian !—What's the matter ?
How ill you look !—What's this ?—You shrink from me !
Has she been ailing, father ?—Where are her eyes ?
I left her with a rose upon her cheek,
Where is it ? That is not the form I clasp'd
A month ago ! What's fallen ? Something ! Ay !
Something ! What is it ?—both are silent ! Then
Something I know has fallen ! To look at you
Is enough—enough !—'twill drive me mad !—I am mad !
Tell me the truth !—Nay, then I'll seek for it
Where I'm more like to find it.

MARIAN.

Stop ! Come back !

No ! Stay ! Forgive me, Edward !

[Falling on her knees.]

EDWARD.

Marian !

Forgive thee ! Why ? For what ?

MARIAN.

Don't ask ! To sea !

On shipboard, and set sail, whate'er the wind,—
Any thing, Edward, but the shore ! To sea !

Rocks, breakers, sands, are nothing !—all the perils
Of leaks, dismasting, canvass blown to threads,
Are nothing !—Foundering !—the dismal'st plight
That ever bark was in, are nothing ! Yea,
Drowning, with thoughts of going deeper down
Than ever plummet sounded, or of graves
Made of the throats of sea monsters, that dog
The fated vessel ! Leap into them sooner
Than trust thy feet on land ! To sea ! To sea !

EDWARD.

What mean you ?

MARIAN.

I will tell while I can !

EDWARD.

Rise up then, and don't kneel to me !

MARIAN.

Forgive me !

EDWARD.

For what ?

MARIAN.

Ay, that's the thing ; you can't forgive me
Until you know for what, and when you know it,
Will you forgive me then ?—You will not ! Yet
Were it my last breath that I speak with to thee,
I love thee dear as ever !—dearer !—dearer !—
I love thee dearer than I ever did !

EDWARD.

Then where's the harm ?

MARIAN.

Where ?—every where !—The sun
Is pale and cold ! there is a haze in the sky,

Chilly and thick, will never clear away !
The earth is wither'd, grass, leaves, flowers and all !
Women and men are chang'd, all cheer and comfort
Departed from their faces and their tongues,
To me !—for thou that mad'st all these to me
Art lost !—

EDWARD.

Am I not faithful to thee still ?

MARIAN.

Thou art, and I am faithful still to thee !
But !—

EDWARD.

What ?

MARIAN.

Oh ! father !

ROBERT.

Well thou may'st reproach me !

MARIAN.

No !—no ! I don't reproach thee ; tell it him—
Stop ! he will know it soon enough—he's here !

Enter NORRIS and others, dressed as for a Wedding.

NORRIS.

Marian ! What ! Edward living !—ay, and here !

EDWARD.

It dawns upon me ! Dawns ?—'Tis open day—
A stormy one, the sky all black, the sea
All foam, all things portending shipwreck ! shipwreck
Already come ! binnacle wash'd away !
Rudder unshipp'd ! not a mast standing ! nothing

But the hull—the lonesome, melancholy hull !
With mountains breaking over it !—She's chang'd !
She's false ! She's lost ! I live, and she is lost !

NORRIS.

Come !

EDWARD.

Will she go to him before my face ?
She will !—She does !—Will she go forth with him ?
Go forth with him to church, and leave me here ?
She's gone—Come death ! Well ! I'm ashore again !
What I did wish for every hour in the day !
Every minute !—Pray for ! dream upon ! live upon !—
More than on food or drink, with hope to get it,
I have got at last—I am on shore again—
Better be at the bottom of the sea !
What's to be done ?—Can any thing be done ?—
My destiny's too hard to bear, and yet
I must bear it.—To be mad ! O, to be mad—
How can my senses stand it ?—What are they made of ?
Why don't they go to pieces ?—Not one plank
Holding by another ! All toss'd here and there
In splinters !—Come, there's comfort in
The knowledge of the cause that wreck'd the ship.
That I will force from her, and then I'll leave her—
Leave every thing—Leave her, leave every thing.

[Exit.

SCENE THE LAST.

*The outside of a Church.**Enter CLERGYMAN, NORRIS, MARIAN, ROBERT, and others.*

CLERGYMAN.

These nuptials are not things of lucky omen.

NORRIS.

I pay no heed to omens.

CLERGYMAN.

Marriage is
A holiday—a day of gladness, though
We drop a tear in 't—Bright looks are its favours !
Lightness of gait, and ease of carriage, are
Its proper dress !—This maid has none of them.

NORRIS.

She weds of her free will.

CLERGYMAN.

You are the bridegroom.

NORRIS.

There stands her father—question him.

CLERGYMAN.

Methinks

You look not like a bridegroom ; no, nor speak ;
There's sullenness upon your brow and tongue,
Care at the heart's core, if not something worse !
His marriage-day is still the merriest
A lover keeps ; it is his harvest home,

When blights and winds, and autumn floods are scap'd,
And all the venture of his tillage housed,
With song and dance, and thankful merry-making.
'Tis strange; but it is your affair, not mine.
You are her father. Gives the maid her hand
Of her free will ?

ROBERT.

She does ; against her choice
She gives her hand, although it breaks her heart.
Your Reverence must have heard, he holds her promise
His price for service rendered unto me,
By which her hand she gives, disjoining it
From her heart, long given to another. Tears,
Entreaties, prayers, all means I have tried, to shake
His stubborn purposes, and to pity bend him—
All thrown away ; yet have resolves the strongest
Given way at last ; perhaps the hour, the place
Thy sacred presence, these perhaps may give
A sway to that was powerless before.
Look on me, Norris ! I'm a father ; see
To what a strait I'm brought, upon my knees
Before thee in the dust ! Turn to my child—
More ghastly, more like death ? She loves thee not.
To save her father—a father less to her
Than she a child to him—she's in the plight
That brings her hither, if she marries thee
It is not with her heart. Don't take her hand ;
Take that, thou tak'st her life along with it ;
Thou lay'st a corpse upon thy bridal bed,
And not a bride. O ! spare her, spare my child !—
Spare me in her—thyself—forego thy claim.
Release her from the word she will not break,
Though keeping it her thread of life will snap ;
Release her from it—give a young girl her life ;
Preserve the remnant of an old man's life,
And make thyself, if not a happy man,
At least a man contented with himself ;

Who else must needs become a verier wretch
Than any that he makes.

NORRIS.

I am here to wed.

CLERGYMAN.

Stern man, look here—thine eyes may serve the place
Of ears, no need of them to learn the cause
Of that poor suppliant. What hast thou heard
Of misery that e'er came up to that?
Plead tears as strong, as she doth plead without?
Sighs?—groans?—all things that serve as tongues to
grief?

She looks despair, as never yet was told
By doleful sound. Art thou a man or what?
What keeps thee, rock, when all around thee melt?
Shake; fall to pieces at the spectacle
Which most ought thee to move? Hast thou no touch
Of Earth or Heaven, which all men have beside?
So to contrast with all? Thou livest and breath'st—
By him thou liv'st and breath'st by, I adjure thee
Forego the hand which He forbids thee take.

NORRIS.

I am the bridegroom, there's the bride; she weds
Of her free will: though hearts go not with hands,
No reason why they may not follow them.
I love her—I will have her—and I take her.

EDWARD. [*rushing in.*]

Angel—I know it all; but know not tongue
Can speak the beauty of so fair a deed;
Self-sacrific'd to save thy father's life
The fairest barque that ever mounted wave
From duty run upon the foulest shore!
Art thou a man? [*to Norris.*—O, reverend Sir, to proof
Without the church let me his manhood put,

And see if in my frame that fibre lives
So basely weak 'twill yield, till at my feet
His claim upon the maiden he renounce ;
It is not reverence to Heaven to stand
And see it outraged in the thing it loves,
Through reverence to Heaven's servant or Heaven's
house.

Norris, come forth.

NORRIS.

Yes ! when I lead, a wife,
Thy Marian from the church.

EDWARD.

She is not mine—
I do forego the maid, do thou forego
Her hand ! If hate for me—loathing to see
The maiden mine—constrains thee to an act
To which a murder were an innocent deed,
I give her up. Pluck up my hopes, although
Their roots have struck to my heart's core, and cast
Away that they shall never flower again
But wither, die, and rot—O, give her up,
And take whate'er by years of toil I have made ;
If that sufficeth not, take me along
To labour for thy gain to my life's end,
To do thy bidding whatso'er it be,
On land or sea—how far soe'er away,
To be thy journeyman will labour through
The four and twenty hours, without repose
Or food, and set to work when they are out—
Only give up the maid, her word—her peace—
Her patience—reason—life.

CLERGYMAN.

No violence—Or is her reason gone,
Or is she in a trance ?

MARIAN.

'Tis coming—

NORRIS.

What?

CLERGYMAN.

Peace.

MARIAN.

How it scowls all around. The sea is black
As the sky. From head to head as black as ink!
There comes the wind. You see—that streak of white
Along the horizon—it grows larger. See—
And larger—That's the wind! 'tis coming on,
Pacing the waves, and stirring up the spray
As horses do the dust when they're in speed.
You hear it now—and now the sea is white
As it was black before.

ROBERT.

Something like this
Occurr'd last night, but I did rouse her, and
Recall her to herself.

NORRIS.

This is no time
For list'ning to a dream.

CLERGYMAN.

Speak'st thou again,
I'll cause them put thee from the church by force;
I'll hear the dream out, if it be a dream;
If that her senses are unsettled, you're
Forbid to take her hand! I charge you, peace!

MARIAN.

It lightens! but—'tis distant!—And it thunders—

Only you cannot hear it !—for the sea
Doth now begin to roar ! You'll hear it, though,
Anon !—'tis coming, listen ! Hold your breath
Don't speak ! I heard a gun !—there 'tis
Again ! And there the ship, rounding the head,
Rising and pitching, and no pity takes
The storm upon her ; but more furious waxes—
And billow after billow, fore-top high,
Do break upon her !

CLERGYMAN.

If I hear thee breathe,
I'll force thee from the church.

MARIAN.

She strikes ! She's fast !
And now the waves do with her what they will !
She's gone to pieces !—Pieces !—What is this ?
A body wash'd on shore, and Norris there,
Rifling it ! Ha ! he stops ! he is alarmed !
He sees that life is in it ? What is that
He does ? He has unclasp'd a knife ! He means
To murder the poor man !—He will !—He does !
Stop ! Norris !—'tis thy father !

NORRIS.

Furies ! Fiends !
What mean you ?

CLERGYMAN.

Thou dost shake ! The blood is gone
Even from thy very lips ! while all beside
Look as they look'd before ! Thou'rt a bad man !

NORRIS.

What heeds a raving girl ?

MARIAN.

Where have I been ?—

The church ? Oh ! I remember !—All is right !
Here, Norris, take my hand !

*[They approach the altar—WOLF rises—NORRIS
lets go MARIAN's hand, and retreats several
paces—the rest pause.]*

NORRIS.

Hell ! what is here ?
Like something from a grave, or from the sea
Cast up untimely and unnaturally ;
Or, worse, a prisoner from the evil place,
If such there be, let out to harrow me
Before my time—affright me into madness !

EDWARD.

Speak not ! observe !

NORRIS.

Wolf !—Wolf !—It is his eyes—
Features—but not the life that moved in them—
His form without his blood ! Is it a thing
That breathes, or only would be thought to breathe ?
Wolf !—I would rush upon it, but my fears
Are bolts that pin me to the spot ! Is it come
To tell upon me ? Cause of blame to him
I gave not ; he went cramm'd with gold away !

EDWARD. *[to Clergyman.]*

Do you hear ?—That man has been a partner with him
In some black deed !

WOLF.

I have fled over sea, over land,
To get away from it !—It follows me !
I have plunged into riot !—I have tried
What solitude would do !—It talks to me !
I see it in the dead of night as well
As in the noon of day. 'Tis only here
I have got a respite from it yet ! In crowds

I have been alone, with it glaring upon me,
Gnashing its teeth, and yelling in mine ears !
But there's another here doth come between
With mild regards, and placid shining face,
And gentle voice which makes, albeit so soft,
My torturers unheard, crying, " Repent !
Confess !—Repent ! Confess !"

NORRIS.

Confess !

WOLF.

I will
Repent, I will confess !—then am I free !
I am a murderer.

NORRIS.

Be thou the fiend—I'll know thee !
Wolf ! (*rusthing up and seizing him.*)

WOLF.

Norris !—What, has it been following thee ?

NORRIS.

Peace !

WOLF. (*furiously.*)

But there is no peace ! It howls, and howls.
No foot is fleet enough to distance it,
To 'scape the horror of its teeth ;—the bloodhound,—
No stream that you can wade will clear thee from,—
That never gives you respite !—except here !
Here is a chance ! This is a place methinks
He cannot enter ; he has hunted me
Till he has driv'n me wild, but since I'm here
His bay methinks begins to die away.
Words have been whispered me, at hearing which
"Twas told me he would slacken in his chase.—
"Repent !—Confess !" those were the words I heard.
I will !—I do !—I am a murderer.

NORRIS.

Coward, where is my gold ?

WOLF.

All clotted o'er !—

Corroded, crumbled with the old man's blood
Which thou lett'st out, and I did leave to spill !— .

NORRIS.

Fiend !

WOLF.

Do not rave at me ! I did not know
It was your father !

EDWARD.

Hear ye ?

NORRIS.

Villain !—die !

With a lie in thy throat !

[*Stabs Wolf.*]

CLERGYMAN.

Stop, wretch !

WOLF.

Thou hast murdered me !

And but for thee I had not murdered him !

But in my soul's strait, on the brink of death

I'll show thee ruth as I do hope to me

That mercy will be shown !—"Repent ! Confess !"

I hear not now the hound !—'twill stop with thee

If there be mercy for a parricide.

[*Dies.*]

NORRIS.

You would not listen to a lunatic !

CLERGYMAN.

At least, unhappy ! thou'rt a murderer !

NORRIS.

Which of you would not kill a mad dog ? Come !
You've no right to hold me ! Show me first
Your warrant, without which you cannot take
A man that's free to prison !—Just as well
Hang me without a trial !—Let me breathe !
Give me a moment's pause !—let my arms free !
O, could I use them now ! The blackest curse
That lips can utter—heart conceive—alight
On all who enter here !—May the roof fall
And bury you alive—may it be in flames !
And every door and window fast upon you !
My blood lie at your doors !—the best among ye
Is worse than I ! My blood be on you all !

[He is dragged out.]

CLERGYMAN.

Poor sinner ! Grace is broad and free enough
Even to cover thee, so mayst thou find—
Pattern of love, and pity, and duty,
Surely in heaven thou wouldst have been rewarded !
But Heaven defers its guerdon for thee there,
To give thee one on earth ! Be blest in love !

THE END.

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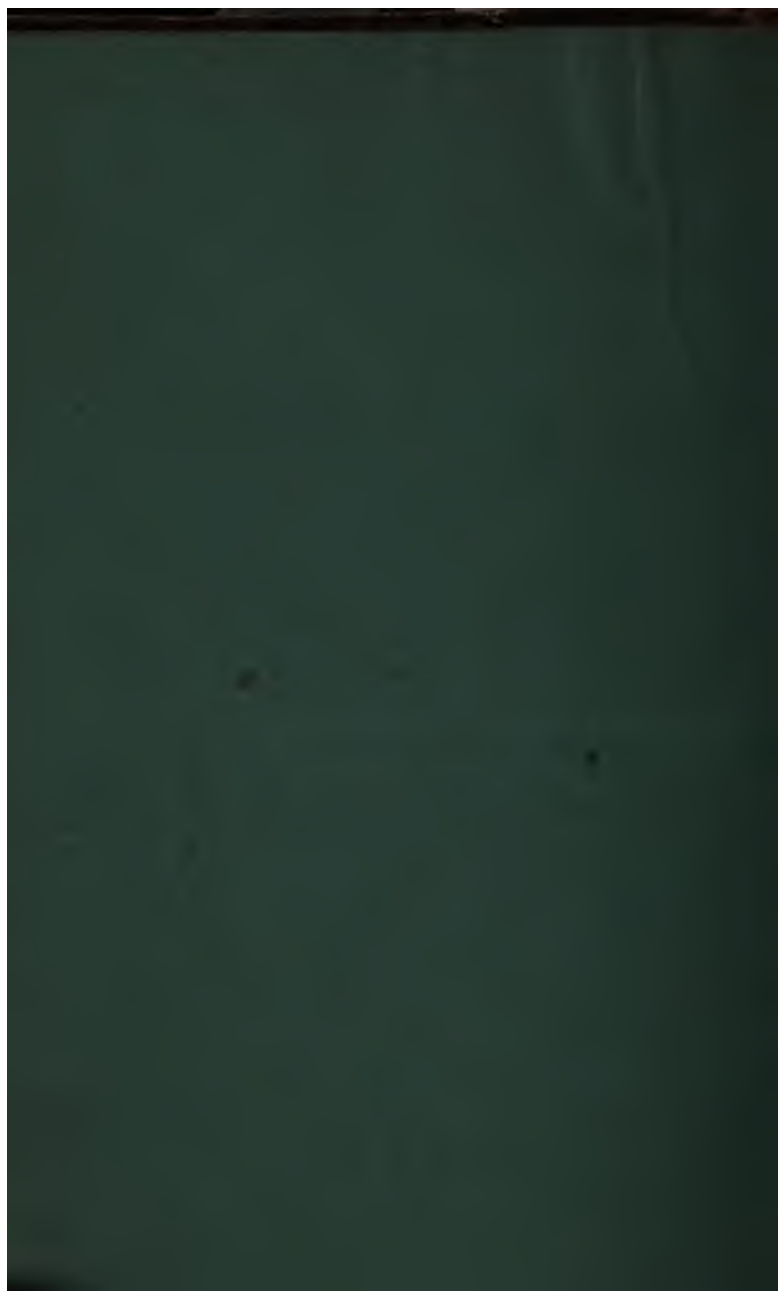
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